

x*6 THE CONTINENTAL REFORMERS

persons, or do they share their sin if they
buy their
goods ? The law of the State allows
moderate interest:
what is to be the attitude of the Church ?
What is
to be done to prevent craftsmen cheating
the consumer
with shoddy wares, and tradesmen
oppressing him with
extortionate profits? Are lotteries
permissible? Is
it legitimate to invest at interest monies
bequeathed
for the benefit of the poor ? The answers
which the
French Synods made to such questions
show the per-
sistence of the idea that the transactions
of business
are the province of the Church, combined
with a natural
desire to avoid an impracticable rigour.
All persons
who have wrung wealth unjustly from others
must make
restitution before they be admitted to
communion, but
their goods may be bought by the faithful,
provided that
the sale is public and approved by the civil
authorities.
Makers of fraudulent wares are to be
censured, and
tradesmen are to seek only " indifferent
gain." On
the question of usury, the same division of
opinion is
visible in the French Reformed Church as
existed at
the same time in England and Holland, and
Calvin's
advice on the subject was requested.
The stricter
school would not hear of confining the
prohibition of
usury to " excessive and scandalous "
exactions, or
of raising money for the poor by interest
on capital.
In France, however, as elsewhere, the day

for these
heroic rigours had passed, and the common-
sense view
prevailed. The brethren were required to
demand no
more than the law allowed and than was
consistent
with charity. Within these limits interest
was not to
be condemned."

Of the treatment of questions of this order
by English
Puritanism something is said in a
subsequent chapter,
In Scotland the views of the reformers as to
economic
ethics did not differ in substance from
those of the
Church before the Reformation, and the
Scottish Book
of Discipline denounced covetousness with
the same
vehemence as did the "accursed JPopery"
which it